

Inspection of a good school: Horizon Community College

Dodworth Road, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 6PD

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Claire Huddart. This school is part of HCAT multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Tom Banham, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alan Richards.

What is it like to attend this school?

Horizon Community College is the cornerstone of the local area. The school works tirelessly to ensure there are no unnecessary distractions to pupils' learning. As a result, pupils thrive. They are happy, safe and committed to their education.

Pupils are treated as individuals. Staff know pupils well and ensure tailored pastoral support helps them to succeed. This underpins a high-quality curriculum that is broad and ambitious. It prepares pupils well for their next steps and builds their confidence for the wider world.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is excellent. They benefit from leaders' relentless commitment to maintaining the high expectations that underpin the work of the college. Pupils value the relationships they have with staff. A culture of mutual respect spreads through the school. As a result, pupils make strong progress through the curriculum.

Pupils are confident and articulate. This is enhanced by a curriculum that extends beyond subject lessons. Pupils enjoy access to a wide variety of clubs, trips and leadership opportunities. A strong focus on citizenship, including current affairs, means pupils engage in debate and explore different views and perspectives. For example, in tutor time, pupils were actively discussing the lack of representation of Black British women in society and throughout history.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed a well-sequenced and thoughtful curriculum. For example, in English, a series of well-chosen texts form the basis of the key stage 3 curriculum. This supports the ambitious aim to turn pupils into subject specialists. Across subjects, leaders have thought carefully about how they will check that pupils have learned the intended curriculum. Through a mixture of ongoing questions and checks, alongside more formal assessments, teachers build a clear picture of pupils' understanding or progression through the curriculum. This means staff swiftly address any misconceptions and adapt the curriculum when needed.

Teachers are specialists in their field. As a result, they present information to pupils clearly and tasks are well matched to what they want pupils to learn. Leaders give teachers clear guidance on how to best support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They capture the support pupils need in incisive summaries or 'Thumbnails' which provide precise information about pupils' individual needs. This means teachers' adaptations are ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupils.

Staff at the school are passionate about ensuring there are no barriers to pupils' success. This is aided by a sharp focus on reading. The school diligently identifies pupils who need extra help. Through a range of pathways, pupils quickly catch up. Dedicated reading programmes are delivered by trained staff. This is supported by a wider commitment to reading in subject areas. Staff provide pupils with effective guidance to read a wide range of engaging and challenging texts. This serves to broaden their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils display excellent attitudes towards their learning. Low-level disruption is rarely seen in lessons. If it does happen, consistent systems mean it is quickly stopped. Outside the classroom, pupils are calm and orderly. Again, when behaviour does not meet expectations, staff act swiftly to intervene. For the minority of pupils who have repeated incidents of poor behaviour, leaders have taken intelligent and highly effective action. The school ensures these pupils have quality on-site provision. Pupils within this provision were keen to talk to inspectors about how the school has helped them to be successful.

The school's values of 'school ready, work ready, life ready' infuse the personal development programme. Teachers deliver a comprehensive citizenship and religious education curriculum that prepares pupils for life beyond the school. This programme is designed effectively, with opportunities for pupils to revisit important information. As a result, pupils have excellent knowledge of healthy relationships, protected characteristics and how to stay safe on and offline. Careers education is a high priority in the school. A dedicated team ensures that pupils have meaningful engagement with the world of work. This includes every Year 10 pupil undertaking a mock interview with a local employer.

Executive leaders of the trust and those responsible for governance are committed to establishing a culture where all pupils are valued members of the school community. They support the school in their dedication to ensuring pupils successfully complete their programmes of study. Staff are exceptionally proud to work at the school. They are positive about the range of steps leaders take to protect their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Horizon Community College, to be good in July 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	146455
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10268478
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2,001
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alan Richards
CEO of the trust	Tom Banham
Principal	Claire Huddart
Website	www.horizoncc.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of HCAT multi-academy trust.
- Less than five pupils attend alternative provision. This provision is unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Horizon Community College converted to become an academy school in June 2019. When its predecessor school, Horizon Community College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders over the course of the inspection. The lead inspector also held a telephone call with the chief executive officer.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the board of trustees. They also met with the chair of the local governing body and two other local governing body members. They reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from trust board meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, history, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited a sample of lessons in other curriculum areas and spoke to additional subject leaders.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and considered the support given to pupils with SEND during lesson visits.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for personal development and visited tutor sessions.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and students formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- A range of school documents were reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff gathered through Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Voyce

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Aejaz Laher

Ofsted Inspector

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